

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 1084

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMXASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK EEI

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 531

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO

SUBJECT: FOLLOW-UP TO NATOMIN: SECRETARY'S PROPOSAL FOR MEETINGS
OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS

REF: STATE 017608

1. WE OFFER THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ON THE BASIS OF OUR EXPERIENCED
OF THE LAST FEW YEARS, WHICH TOTALLY SUBSTANTIATES THE NEED FOR
FREQUENT INTERFACE BETWEEN NATO PERMREPS AND POLITICAL DIRECTORS,
AFFORDING REGULAR EXPOSURE OF THE LATTER TO THE POLICY THINKING
AND SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATIONS WHICH GOVERN NATO DECISIONS.

2. THE DUTCH POLITICAL DIRECTOR, BARON DIEDERIC VAN LYNDEN, HAS
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HELD THE JOB SINCE 1970 FOLLOWING HIS RETURN FROM A SIX-YEAR TOUR IN LONDON. THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM STAY IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH HIM ON ALL IMPORTANT POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND HAVE GOTTEN A GOOD FEEL OF THE MAN. VAN LYNDEN IS A CONVINCED EUROPEANIST WHOSE PERSONAL SYMPATHIES APPEAR TO LIE FIRST WITH THE UK, WITH THE FRG AND FRANCE IN AN APPROXIMATE TIE FOR SECOND PLACE. HE IS WELL DISPOSED TOWARD THE UNITED STATES BUT SEES US AS BELONGING TO ANOTHER GALAXY. IN THIS RESPECT HE DOUBTLESS DIFFERS FROM SOME OF HIS POLITICAL DIRECTOR COLLEAGUES.

3. WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE EXTENT TO WHICH VAN LYNDEN'S OWN POLICY THINKING HAS BEEN INFLUENCED BY HIS ALMOST CONSTANT ASSOCIATION WITH THE OTHER EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS. PERHAPS BECAUSE OF HIS LONG BRITISH EXPOSURE AND HIS BRITISH-BORN WIFE HE SEEMS TO BE IMBUED WITH A QUOTE CLUB UNQUOTE SPIRIT TOWARD THE EC NINE POLITICAL DIRECTORS. HE ENJOYS THEIR COMPANY, HE IS PROUD OF HIS MEMBERSHIP, AND HE MAKES EVERY EFFORT TO OBSERVE THE HOUSE RULES AND WORK OUT INTERNAL DISAGREEMENTS.

4. THESE FEELINGS OF IDENTIFICATION AND SOLIDARITY WITH HIS FELLOW POLITICAL DIRECTORS BECAME MUCH MORE APPARENT DURING THE PROTRACTED DELIBERATIONS THAT EVENTUALLY PRODUCED THE EC NINE MIDDLE EAST DECLARATION LAST NOVEMBER 6. FROM WHAT VAN LYNDEN AND OTHERS HAVE TOLD US WE CONCLUDE THAT HE WAS ONE OF THESE IN THE NINE MOST ANXIOUS TO REACH AGREEMENT ON A COMMON POSITION EVEN IF THIS MEANT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO SHIFT ITS STAND SOMEWHAT TOWARD THE ARABS. LIKEWISE, AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ARAB OIL BOYCOTT AGAINST NETHERLANDS VAN LYNDEN PINNED HIS HOPES ON FRANCO-BRITISH WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE IN A COMMON EC APPROACH TO THE ENERGY PROBLEM. HE WAS APPRECIATIVE OF THE US OFFER TO BE OF ASSISTANCE BUT LEFT US WITH A CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT HE HOPED HIS COUNTRY WOULD NOT HAVE TO PICK IT UP.

5. FINALLY, WE NOTICED SOME DIFFERENCE IN THE REACTION OF FONMIN VAN DER STOEL, WHO ACCEPTED THE SECRETARY'S POINT THAT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST WAR CONSTITUTED A SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THE ALLIANCE, AND VAN LYNDEN'S REACTION WHICH FOCUSED MORE ON THE DISRUPTIVE EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON EC SOLIDARITY. LIKEWISE VAN LYNDEN AND SOME OF HIS SENIOR CAREER COLLEAGUES PROFESSED SOME CONCERN AT THE PROSPECT THAT THE NETHERLANDS MIGHT BE FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ITS SOLIDARITY WITH THE EC NINE AND ITS LOYALTY
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TO THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE.

6. VAN LYNDEN'S RECENT QUOTE CASE HISTORY UNQUOTE ILLUSTRATES THAT HIS VIEWPOINT AND RECOMMENDATIONS HAVE BEEN CONSTRAINED BY THE DISCUSSIONS AMONG THE EC POLITICAL DIRECTORS, AND BY THE

PRICE HE IS APPARENTLY WILLING TO PAY TO REACH A CONSENSUS IN THAT COUNTRY'S FOREIGN POLICY APPARATUS THE VIEWS AND POSITIONS HE BRINGS BACK FROM HIS FREQUENT CONTACTS WITH HIS OPPOSITE NUMBERS IN THE NINE ARE SURE TO RECKIVE A CAREFUL AND OFTEN DECISIVE HEARING AT THE TOP LEVELS OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

7. THE PROBLEM IS SEEN FROM THE HAGUE IS THAT THE POLITICAL DIRECTORS ARE PREOCCUPIED WITH THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN EC POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS TO THE DETRIMENT OF OTHER EQUALLY IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS THE COHESION AND VITALITY OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE. A GREAT ADVANTAGE OF THE PROPOSED CONSULTATIONS WITH THE NATO PERMREPS, AS SEEN FROM THE HAGUE, WILL BE TO ACHIEVE A BETTER BALANCE IN VAN LYNDEN'S APPROACH TO THE MANY CRITICAL QUESTIONS THAT CONCERN BOTH NATO AND THE EC. VAN LYNDEN'S REACTION TO THE PROPOSAL, IN OUR ONE BRIEF EXCHANGE WAS TO QUESTION HOW HE WOULD FIND THE TIME FOR AN ADDITIONAL SERIES OF MEETINGS. WE WILL DISCUSS THIS MATTER WITH HIM AT GREATER LENGTH AND TRY TO ENLIST HIS SUPPORT AND THAT OF OTHER POLICY MAKERS IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO BREAK THE IMPASSE BLOCKING THIS NEEDED INITIATIVE. IF NEVERTHELESS THE PROBLEM PERSISTS WE SUGGEST THE SECRETARY SPEAK TO FONMIN VAN DER STOEL ABOUT IT AT THE FEBRUARY 11 ENERGY MEETING.

8. THE AMBASSADOR HAS SEEN AND APPROVED THIS CABLE.
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